

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-16, and 19-30 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1 and 16 are independent claims.

Claim Objections

Claims 12 and 16 have been objected to because of minor informalities. In response, Applicants have made cosmetic changes to claims 12 and 16.

Claims 6-9, 14, 15, 23, and 28-30 have been objected to as allegedly failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim.

The Examiner has interpreted the wording of independent claims 1 and 16 as meaning that “there can be no other source of heating of the metal strip except for the specific heated support roller of claims 1/16.” Office Action dated September 3, 2003 at page 2, para. 3.

Therefore, Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 16 to recite a method or device in which the metal strip 1) is heated before, during and after application through contact of the internal face with said heated support roller, and 2) is “heated before application of said polymer composition to said external face only through contact with said heated support roller.”

As such, amended claims 1 and 16 recite that the metal strip is heated through its internal face by the heated support roller, but also leave open the possibility of further heating. Some *non-limiting* examples of this are further heating accomplished through contact with the applied molten polymer (dependent claim 6), further heating occurring when airing the thermosetting material (dependent claim 9), or further heating when applying a coating to the internal face (claims 1-15 & 28-30).

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
Appln. No. 09/807,387
Docket No. Q64043

It is noted that amended claims 1 and 16 now recite that the heating of the metal strip *before application of the polymer composition* (i.e., preheating) is accomplished “only through contact of the internal face with said heated support roller.” To achieve this preheating step, the strip is fed over the heated support roller before applying the polymer layer, with the “internal” face being held in contact with the hot surface of the roller.

Fig. 4 of the present application shows a *non-limiting* example of this preheating step. The preheating occurs during the movement from point E to point C on the heated roller 1” before applying the coating with the coated roller 4.

In contrast to the invention of amended claims 1 and 16, JP 02-241737 (which was cited in the Office Action dated January 16, 2003) merely discloses a method of manufacturing a laminate metal plate in which the metal plate 3 is *preheated* by a preheating unit before coming into contact with the roll 1 (support roller). JP ‘737 at Abstract (discussed in the previous Amendment).

Conclusions

In view of these amendments, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the objections to the claims and to allow these claims.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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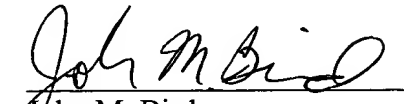
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